



Guardian Angels growing statewide

Question: Whatever happened to the Guardian Angels Hawaii Chapter?

Answer: The Hawaii chapter, which started on Oahu, is continuing to expand on the island and throughout the state.

Last month, the chapter held a graduation for a handful of members in Lahaina. Members also hope to establish a chapter in Kihei, Maui, on Kauai and on the Big Island, said Ricardo Garcia, the Hawaii chapter's founder and director.

Garcia said the group wants to expand to the neighbor islands to help other communities to create a "safe and better Hawaii."

Members undergo three months of training that covers self-defense, learning state and federal laws, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and disaster preparedness.

About 25 members belong to the Oahu chapter. Members who conduct patrols range from age 17 to 77. Patrols have expanded to Kailua, Kaneohe, Waimanalo and the North Shore.

Patrols were focused in Waikiki, Ewa Beach, Waipahu and Honokai Hale when the Guardian Angels established themselves on Oahu three years ago.

Garcia said he has observed a decrease in illegal activity at Kuhio Avenue in Waikiki, Ewa Beach Park, and the "Pupu" streets in Waipahu since they patrolled the areas.

Members also help neighborhoods form their own citizen patrol groups. The Guardian Angels are also active in community service projects such as assisting the homeless and participating in the Adopt-a-Highway program.

The Hawaii chapter will celebrate its third anniversary on May 18.

Garcia said many people were pessimistic about the chapter when it started. "They thought we would disappear. ... It's not going anywhere," he said.

Members of the Guardian Angels wear the trademark red berets and white T-shirts emblazoned with the words "Guardian Angels Patrol." Members are equipped with handcuffs but no weapons.

